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ABSTRACT

A study of a cemetery can reveal much about the lives of people of the past and can be used as a supplement to classroom experiences. Possible objectives of a field trip to a cemetery might be: (1) to develop an appreciation and awareness of the cemetery as a supplement to the present curricula of art, language arts, history, mathematics, and others; (2) to develop a respect and appreciation for this particular resource that will result in proper care of, and behavior at, the cemetery; (3) to develop an understanding of men of past generations, their relationship to their environment, and their effects upon our present environment; (4) to motivate students to do further study on their own, apart from that done in school; and (5) to have students become aware of their own feelings while in this type of environment. In this study guide, samples of concepts, topics, and questions have been organized into subject matter categories: (JH)

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TAFT CAMPUS OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. I

"THE CEMETERY"

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THE CEMETERY:

An Educational Resource - Outdoors

-- Morley Lee

INTRODUCTION

The cemetery has many educational values for school children. It is a place very "sacred and dear" to those who have lost friends or members of their family. It is important therefore, that students treat this environment with respect and realize the significance of the cemetery as part of their culture.

Nearly every community has an old cemetery of historic and educational value. A study of it can reveal much about the lives of people of the past and can be used as a supplement to many classroom experiences. History and sociology, especially are enriched thereby.

PRE-PLANNING

For optimum learning, classroom study should be closely correlated with the outdoor experience to give a natural transition. For example, a discussion about pioneer life in the area can develop an interest in doing outdoor research. The students should help decide upon proper behavior while in the cemetery and will determine the purposes for going. Small group organization may work well, for investigation on the site. Each group can determine several questions that they would be interested in answering. However, permission should be sought from those responsible for the cemetery.

SOME POSSIBLE OBJECTIVES

1. To develop an appreciation and awareness of the cemetery as a supplement to the present curricula of art, language arts, history, mathematics, and others.

2. To develop a respect and appreciation for this particular resource that will result in proper care of and behavior at the cemetery.

3. To develop an understanding of men of past generations, their relationship to their environment, and their affect upon our present environment.

4. To motivate students to do further study on their own apart from that done in school.

5. To have students become aware of their own feelings while in this type of environment.

CEMETERIES ARE INTERDISCIPLINARY

In the obsession to departmentalize learning, man may overlook the advantages of studying some things in their entirety. He may be guilty of studying only one subject area to the exclusion of others. He may overlook important relationships among subject areas. Outdoors we find the whole of life before us, making it unnecessary to fragment learning into subject areas. We can go to the cemetery's environment to discover interrelationships and enhance every area of the curricula.

For the purpose of this study guide, the following samples of concepts, topics, and questions have been organized into subject matter categories:

Mathematics

1. Age at time of death.
2. Oldest person
3. Oldest grave
4. Most recent grave
5. Tracing the family trees
6. Average age of people buried in a given year or decade
7. Geometric shapes of stones --

   spheres
   pyramids
   rectangles
   cylinders
   cones
   cubes
   combinations of the above

8. Number of years since someone has been buried in the cemetery.

Language Arts

1. Differences in written language
2. Meanings of epitaphs - their significance, era of time in which they were used. Write some down, choose a favorite. (See following on epitaphs)
3. Names and naming of people - a reflection of the culture, religious beliefs, nationality
4. General description of the cemetery study experience
5. Articles for school or local newspaper regarding significance of the study
6. A story about one of the pioneers whose name appears on a stone
7. Research one of the persons buried in the cemetery
8. Significance of the name of the cemetery
9. Number of tombstones with epitaphs on them
10. Some feelings about the cemetery, the stones, those who died
11. Attitude changes, if any because of the visit

Epitaphs

An epitaph generally means, an inscription or saying in memory of the dead.

The following epitaphs demonstrate a variety of form and mood

For one who would not be buried in Westminster Abbey:

> Heroes, and kings! your distance keep:
> In peace let one poor poet sleep,
> Who never flattered folks like you:
> Let Horace blush, and Virgil too.
> --Alexander Pope, 1688-1744 [1]

"John Gray's epitaph upon himself is a satirical, even disillusioned, epigram..."

> My own epitaph:
>
> Life is a jest, and all things show it.
> I thought so once; and now I know it.
> -- John Gray, 1685-1732[1]

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[1] Untermeyer, Louis, and Davidson, Carter Poetry: Its Appreciation and Enjoyment, New York, Harcourt Brace, and Co. 1934, pp. 429-431.

"Dryden's much-quoted couplet is still more cynical, but its wit has preserved it."

Epitaph on his wife:

> Here lies my wife: here let her lie!
> Now she's at rest -- and so am I.
> -- John Dryden, 1631-1700[1]

For Sir John Vanbrugh, Arichitect

> Lie heavy on him, earth! for he
> Laid many a heavy load on thee.
> -- Abel Evans, 18th century[1]

Hic Jacet

> Here lie I, Martin Eldinbrodde,
> Ha' mercy on my soul, Lord God,
> As I would do, were I Lord God,
> An' Thou wert Martin Eldinbrodde.
> --From Norfolk's Epitaphs, 1861[1]

Symbols often accompanied the epitaph,[2]

The hourglass symbol accompanied by:

As runs the glass
Our life doth pass.

A very common symbol - the figure of a cock, accompanied by:

Peter deny'd
his Lord and cry'd.

Science

1. Weathering of stone markers
2. Determination of number of years that the cemetery would endure should no upkeep be done
3. Relationship between time and amount of weathering of stones

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[1] Untermeyer, Louis, and Davidson, Carter. Poetry: Its Appreciation and Enjoyment, New York, Horcourt, Brace, and Co. 1934, pp. 429-431.

[2] Marsal, Sonia, Mortality Writ in Stone, Early New England Gravestones, Americas, September 1964. p. 28.

4. Average life expectancy with present man's life span

5. Trees and plants of the area

6. Comparison of size of trees on or near cemetery at this time of burial of older members of the cemetery

7. Determination of when the trees were planted - before, after or with the various graves in the cemetery.

8. Observation of any evidences of deterioration and lack of attention - what plants and trees are taking over? Which ones would one expect to follow?

9. Condition of the soil on the graves

Geology

1. Types of stones used for grave marking

2. Availability of different types of stones

3. Origin of some of the stones (transportation)

4. Kinds of material used most often for grave markings

5. Some rocks are more easily carved and shaped than are others

6. Some stones last much longer than others. Determine a hardness scale (from hardest to softest) of the types of stones studied. (pH test)

Social Studies

1. History and family trees related to certain families

2. Burial customs and problems. Ideas about death and attitudes toward life.

3. Religious beliefs of those buried and of the community as a whole

4. Ways of remembersing the dead in different cultures from our own

5. Different countries and cultures represented within the cemetery - nationalities

6. Evidences of epidemics, plagues, wars, or catastrophes in the community

7. Identification of life styles of former people

8. Evidences of and importance of current upkeep of cemetery

9. Ownership of the land where the cemetery is located

10. What is the significance of flowers on the graves?

11. Values of a cemetery study

12. Some students may wish to discuss death. Is it related to the values we hold?

13. Indications of wealth of people, standards of living

14. Indications of prominent families

15. Graves of veterans and soldiers

16. Causes for which men die

17. Cost of land - use of land - press of population - multiple use of land - future of cemeteries - other ways of remembering the dead that succeeding generations may resort to

18. Evidences that a church once stood on or by the cemetery

19. Size of stones during certain eras of time. Where did the stonecutters receive their training and skills

20. Do women live longer than men?

21. Space yet available for graves

22. Unmarked graves

23. Years in which most deaths occur

24. Direction graves are facing

25. Definition of a Mausoleum - is there one in the cemetery?

26. Infant mortality - relation to lack of medical attention

27. Indications of cause of death - accidental, old age

28. Indications of the occupations of dead - worth to community and world

29. Indication to family size - pioneers had large families

30. Abandoned graveyard - when and why?

Geography

1. Location of the cemetery in the community
2. The story of the settlement of the community
3. Lay of the land - sloping or level, high or low with respect to remainder of community
4. Mapping of cemetery
5. Section of cemetery with oldest graves
6. Use of and ownership of land or buildings next to cemetery

Art

1. Tombsonte decorations may be photographed or sketched
2. Rubbings can be made of the lettering and design (see following on "Rubbings").
3. Changes in design and shapes of stones through the years
4. Symmetry of markers usually evident
5. Evidences of beauty and color
6. Reasons for footstones as well as headstones on some graves
7. Depth of some of the inscriptions

Rubbings

There are several reasons for making rubbings of the inscriptions on gravestones. Rubbings can make further study back in the classroom more interesting. They also have a unique quality of their own that many believe to be works of art.

Remember how you reproduce the imprint of a penny? The imprint of a penny is duplicated when a piece of paper is laid over it and a pencil is rubbed on the paper to produce an imprint of the original. A similar technique is used in monument rubbings. This is not simply a child's hobby. In England and several European countries this has been a favorite past time for some time. Several books have been written about it. In some areas people are charged an hourly fee to do the rubbings. It has been made unlawful in parts of England because of the potential damage that can be done to monuments. There are professional "monument rubbers." The rubbings are sold to art and history lovers throughout the world.

Professional often use rice paper or speedball paper. A soft paper works best. Graphite sticks and conte crayon are popular as the rubbing instruments. For school, use wax crayon or graphite works well with foolscap or copy paper. Charcoal, chalk or pastels make interesting textures in the rubbing. Care must be taken to ensure crayon markings do not fall off the paper and mar the gravestones.

Sometimes experiementation may be necessary to achieve maximum results due to the variety of structure, depth of surface quality, and the characteristics of the various media. Trying several combinations will produce a variety of results.

Lay the paper flat, tape if necessary to maintain position, then by using the marking medium flat with the widest possible area on the paper, stroke across the surface as evenly as possible. Rub until the underneath surface shows adequately on the surface of the paper. Dark colors are usually best.

For effect combine several textural studies into a montage, collé or collage type composition. Several colors might be combined. By varying the position of the paper over the same surface and rubbing,several reproductions might be achieved in composition of the same paper. Overlap of the same or varying surfaces, with more pressure applied to some for emphasis could achieve a sense of depth. Use of a specific color scheme could achieve some very pleasing compositions.

A spray fixative may be used to insure against smearing and smudging. The rubbings can be mounted using poster board. Students may want to make an art gallery type display.

References on Rubbing:

Green, Peter, Surface Printing. New York, Watson-Guptil Publications, 1967, $6.95.

Andrew, Laye, Creative Rubbings, New York: Watson-Guptil Publications, 1967, $6.95.

Fact Finding and Follow-Up

Various surveys can be made during the cemetery study. The conclusions of these surveys can be followed up in the classroom with further research. Resources such as the local library, newspapers, historical societies, and older citizens should not be overlooked when searching for information.

Students may be interested in gather information in certain areas of the cemetery or if the cemetery is not too large, they may make a study of the entire cemetery. Some of the following ideas could be used in gathering information, drawing conclusions, and making charts and graphs.

Name (Last name first)	Year of Birth	Year of Death	Type of Grave Marker	Miscellaneous Information

Group the ages, in five or ten year intervals, of the people whose names you recorded (Example - number of people who died age 0 - 5) Analyze the results and give possible reasons for high death rates of certain groups, men, women and children.

From your data you can find out how many grave markers in the cemetery were made of granite
metal
sandstone
limestone
marble
concrete
basalt
soapstone
others
combinations

Another interesting use of your information might be to group names that are usually associated with a particular nationality or country.

References will allow students to study "burial" customs of the

North American Indians
different African tribes
traditional Chinese
Moslems
people of the South Pacific
Hindus
Others

Evaluation

An important part of the follow-up sequence of the program is to review the objectives set during the pre-planning session. A few objectives were suggested at the beginning of the paper. How well were these objectives realized? An evaluation is easily carried out by developing a series of questions. Did the experience change the behavior of the student in the ways originally planned.

M. Lee/mj
12-69